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NYOKA WHITE

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THE U.N. AND RHODESIA

ANNCR:

THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL HAS SCHEDULED GENERAL DEBATE FOR LATER THIS WEEK ON THE PROBLEM OF RHODESIA. IN RHODESIA ITSELF, BLACKS AND WHITE HAVE BEEN HOLDING LOW-KEY TALKS TRYING TO REACH AGREEMENT ON A CONSTITUTION. NYOKA WHITE HAS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT ON THE RHODESIAN PROBLEM.

VOICE:

IF WHITE LEADERS IN SOUTHERN RHODESIA HAD LISTENED TO GREAT BRITAIN IN 1961, RHODESIA'S AGONY MIGHT WELL BE OVER NOW. AT THAT TIME, GREAT BRITAIN PROPOSED A COMPLICATED TWO-TIER VOTING SYSTEM TO GRADUALLY ENFRANCHISE RHODESIA'S BLACKS. HAD THE CONSTITUTION BEEN ACCEPTED, RHODESIA WOULD HAVE ACHIEVED MAJORITY RULE THIS YEAR.

INSTEAD, THE WHITES DECIDED TO TRY AND HOLD ON TO CONTROL. IN NOVEMBER 1965, PRIME MINISTER IAN SMITH UNILATERALLY DECLARED INDEPENDENCE FROM GREAT BRITAIN. THE RHODESIANS IN EFFECT EXILED THEMSELVES FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD. IN THE MORE THAN TEN YEARS SINCE THEN, NOT ONE NATION HAS RECOGNIZED THE LEGITIMACY OF THE SALISBURY GOVERNMENT -- NOT EVEN NEIGHBORING SOUTH AFRICA WHICH IS ITSELF RULED BY A WHITE MINORITY.

THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL IMPOSED MANDATORY ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST RHODESIA IN 1966, MEANING, IN THEORY, THAT ALL U.N. MEMBER NATIONS WERE TO STOP TRADING WITH THE ILLEGAL REGIME. THE SANCTIONS HAVE HAD SOME EFFECT ON RHODESIA'S ECONOMY, BUT HAVE NOT HAD ENOUGH

LEVERAGE TO FORCE POLITICAL CHANGE. (OPT) PRIMARILY, THIS IS SO, BECAUSE SANCTIONS HAVE NOT BEEN ENFORCEABLE AND THERE HAVE BEEN WIDESPREAD VIOLATIONS. THE SANCTIONS MAY EVEN HAVE HELPED RHODESIA'S ECONOMY IN ONE SENSE. THEY FORCED THE COUNTRY TO BE MORE SELF-RELIANT, DEVELOPING ITS OWN INDUSTRIES AND A WIDER AGRICULTURAL BASE.

IN 1972, BRITAIN MADE ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO GET ITS BREAKAWAY COLONY TO AGREE TO EVENTUAL MAJORITY RULE. BUT THE EFFORT FAILED AND THE BRITISH WASHED THEIR HANDS OF THE SITUATION, SAYING THEY WOULD NOT RECOGNIZE THE LEGITIMACY OF THE GOVERNMENT UNTIL IT HAD A CONSTITUTION ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH BLACKS AND WHITES. (END OPT)

RHODESIA HAS NEARLY SIX MILLION BLACKS AND ABOUT 275 THOUSAND WHITES. THAT'S A RATIO OF MORE THAN TWENTY-ONE AFRICANS FOR EVERY WHITE CITIZEN, AND THE RATIO IS INCREASING IN THE AFRICANS FAVOR.

THE REALITY OF THESE NUMBERS IS ONE FACTOR IN BRINGING WHITE RHODESIANS TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE WITH BLACKS. THE SANCTIONS MAY HAVE HAD SOME EFFECT; AND A THIRD FACTOR IS INDEPENDENCE FOR BLACK GOVERNMENTS IN MOZAMBIQUE AND ANGOLA.

BUT THE REAL IMPETUS FOR THE TALKS CAME THIS YEAR FROM TWO UNLIKELY COLLABORATORS -- ZAMBIA'S PRESIDENT KENNETH KAUNDA AND SOUTH AFRICA'S PRIME MINISTER JOHN VORSTER. BOTH GOVERNMENTS HAVE INTERESTS IN A RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT: ZAMBIA, BECAUSE IT NEEDS OUTLETS TO THE SEA FOR ITS MINERALS; AND SOUTH AFRICA, BECAUSE IT HAS BEEN PUSHING A DIALOGUE WITH BLACK AFRICA AS A MEANS OF LESSENING PRESSURES AGAINST ITS OWN WHITE MINORITY GOVERNMENT.

(OPT) PRESIDENT KAUNDA AND PRIME MINISTER VORSTER ARE CREDITED WITH BRINGING RHODESIAN BLACK AND WHITE LEADERS TOGETHER FOR TALKS LAST SUMMER IN A RAILROAD CAR AT VICTORIA FALLS. THOSE TALKS IN TURN HAVE LED TO THE SESSIONS WHICH HAVE GONE ON IN RECENT WEEKS IN SALISBURY. (END OPT)

THE MAIN ISSUE IS THE BLACK DEMAND FOR IMMEDIATE MAJORITY RULE, SOMETHING MOST WHITES IN RHODESIA REJECT ABSOLUTELY. THERE IS ANOTHER MAJOR PROBLEM. EVEN IF AGREEMENT IS REACHED, THERE IS NO GUARANTEE IT WILL BE ACCEPTED BY ALL OR EVEN MOST BLACK RHODESIANS. IAN SMITH IS NEGOTIATING WITH JOSHUA NKOMO, WHO IS ONLY ONE OF THREE LEADERS OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL COUNCIL. THE COUNCIL IS THE UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION FOR ALL BLACK RHODESIAN NATIONALIST GROUPS. THE TWO OTHER ANC LEADERS -- BISHOP ABEL MUZOREWA AND NDBANINGI SITHOLE -- ARE IN EXILE IN NEIGHBORING BLACK AFRICAN NATIONS. THEY ARE KNOWN TO OPPOSE NKOMO AND MAY NOT GO ALONG WITH ANY SETTLEMENT HE NEGOTIATES.

THE SECURITY COUNCIL IN NEW YORK DEBATES THE RHODESIAN SITUATION THIS WEEK. BUT WHATEVER RESOLUTIONS OR PROPOSALS COME OUT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL, THE GENERAL FEELING REMAINS THAT ANY SETTLEMENT MUST BE HAMMERED OUT -- STEP BY PAINFUL STEP -- BY THE RHODESIANS THEMSELVES. BOTH BLACK AND WHITE RHODESIANS.

EMERGING FROM RECENT TALKS, MR. SMITH AND MR. NKOMO SAID THEY HAVE MADE SOME PROGRESS. THEY WOULDN'T SPECIFY WHAT, BUT SAID ANY PROGRESS AT ALL IS GOOD NEWS. THE REST OF THEIR MESSAGE: DON'T RUSH US. THE TALKS COULD TAKE A LONG TIME.